

Message Text

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UNCLAS TORONTO 2184

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TAGS: PINT, SOPN, CA

SUBJECT: TORONTO STAR DETAILS SUGGESTED FEDERAL PROVINCIAL
RELATIONSHIP IN SERIES ON QUEBEC

REF: TORONTO 2162

1. THE FOURTH OF THE TORONTO STAR'S EDITORIALS IN RESPONSE TO THE "PERIL" OF THE SEPARATIST VICTORY IN QUEBEC, "A PLAN TO KEEP CANADA'S DREAM ALIVE," WAS PUBLISHED DECEMBER 1, THE EDITORIAL, NOTING HOW RIGIDITY IN THE BRITISH COLONIAL SYSTEM LED TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, STATED THAT CANADA "AS NOW CONSTITUTED -- WITH ONE OF THE MOST RIGID CONSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD -- CANNOT ACCOMMODATE QUEBEC'S AUTONOMOUS SURGE, WHICH ITSELF IS ROOTED IN THE INSTINCT OF A PEOPLE FOR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC SURVIVAL." THE EDITORIAL PROPOSED A DECENTRALIZED FEDERAL SYSTEM IN WHICH "OTTAWA WOULD PLAY A MUCH SMALLER AND LESS OBTRUSIVE -- BUT STILL VITAL -- ROLE IN OUR LIVES."

2. THE STAR STATED THAT THREE BROAD AREAS MUST REMAIN WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO "MAINTAIN CANADA AS A WORKABLE ENTITY.": (1) ECONOMIC CONTROL, (2) DEFENSE, (3) FOREIGN POLICY ("WITH ALLOWABLE EXCEPTIONS FOR MATTERS UNDER PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION"). THE EDITORIAL CONTINUED THAT IMMIGRATION
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WOULD HAVE TO BE CENTRALIZED BUT THAT "OVERALL POLICY COULD

AND SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO SERVE QUEBEC'S PARTICULAR NEEDS."
THE STAR FELT THAT IN DEFENSE "QUEBEC COULD HAVE ITS SYMBOL BY
PUTTING ITS FORCES IN DIFFERENCE UNIFORMS" WITHIN A UNIFIED SYSTEM
AND THAT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS "IT WOULD BE TOLERABLE FOR QUEBEC TO
HAVE RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, AND EVEN EXCHANGES OF REP-
PRESENTATIVES, FOR MATTERS UNDER ITS CONTROL" (E.G. - EDUCATION).

3. THE EDITORIAL STATED "TO PREVENT A WIDENING OF REGIONAL
DISPARITIES IN LIVING STANDARDS AND PUBLIC SERVICES, EQUALIZATION
PAYMENTS SHOULD BE CONTINUED FROM OTTAWA TO PROVINCES BELOW
THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN PER CAPITA WEALTH PRODUCTION. QUEBEC
IS ONE OF THEM. ALL OTHER FEDERAL FUNCTIONS AND POWERS COULD BE
OFFERED TO ANY PROVINCE THAT WANTED THEM -- AN OFFER THAT GETS
AROUND THE CHARGE OF 'SPECIAL STATUS' FOR QUEBEC ALONE, EVEN
THOUGH QUEBEC COULD BE EXPECTED TO MAKE FULLEST USE OF IT. SUCH
A CHANGE WOULD GIVE QUEBEC FULL CONTROL OF THE FIELDS THAT
REALLY MATTER TO ITS UNIQUE IDENTITY: IN PARTICULAR, CULTURE,
COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL POLICY AND PROBABLY CRIMINAL LAW."

4. "BUT SWEEPING CHANGE, RATIONALLY AND VOLUNTARILY
ENTERED INTO, IS BETTER THAN HAVING A DISRUPTIVE CHANGE
FORCED UPON US. AND NEITHER MINOR CHANGES NOR
WAITING AND HOPING WILL ASSURE THE SURVIVAL OF CANADA.
IT'S POSSIBLE OF COURSE THAT THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT WOULD REJECT
SUCH A DEAL AS WE HAVE OUTLINED, AND PROCEED TOWARD OUTRIGHT
SEPARATION. EVEN SO, THE CANADAIN CAUSE IN QUEBEC -- WHICH
IS FAR FROM BEING LOST NOW -- COULD BE GREATLY STRENGTHENED BY
PUTTING A BOLD NEW POLICY FORWARD IN PLACE OF THE TRUDEAU
FEDERALISM WHICH HAS SIGNALLY FAILED TO WIN QUEBEC'S LOYALTY.
IT SHOULD BE FAR EASIER TO PROMOTE THE FEDERALIST CASE THERE WITH
A POLICY THAT GUARANTEED FRENCH CANADAIN QUEBECKERS NOT ONLY
ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE, AS COMPARED WITH SEPARATION, BUT ALSO
COMPLETE CONTROL OF THEIR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DESTINY.
A NEW DEAL SHOULD AT LEAST BE TRIED, BUT NOT BY THE TRUDEAU
GOVERNMENT IN ITS PRESENT STATE OF WEAKNESS. STRENGTHENING
THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE TRIALS AHEAD -- AND FOR A BOLD
ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE CANADIAN UNION -- WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A
FINAL EDITORIAL TOMORROW."
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